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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUSHANBE 002083

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/CACEN, SA
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN MIN OF SECURITY CLOSELY WATCHES INDEPENDENT
MEDIA

REF: DUSHANBE 1732

CLASSIFIED BY: Thomas Armbruster, Charge d' Affaires, Dushanbe,
Tajikistan, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[11.](#) (C) The Tajik government may be ratcheting up its already successful efforts to limit freedom of speech. National Association of Independent Mass Media in Tajikistan (NANSMIT) chairman, Nuriddin Karshiboev confided to Poloff December 16 that his contacts at the Ministry of Security--- his former employer---said ministry employees complained about NANSMIT during a staff meeting. In response to NANSMIT's criticism of the government crackdown on mass media and free speech, the Minister himself ordered his staff to investigate the organization. He has also threatened to ban NANSMIT for their statements.

[12.](#) (SBU) Unfazed by MoS threats, Karshiboev noted NANSMIT fully complies with all regulations and any attempt to ban NANSMIT would be illegal. However, government pressure has had its consequences; Karshiboev claimed certain international NGOs refused to fund NANSMIT projects due to government crackdown on independent media.

[13.](#) (U) NANSMIT recently called government policies a return to Soviet-era censorship. The organization particularly criticized the government's recent revision of the Law on Publishing Business, passed by parliament in November. The change mandates all editorial offices and publishers deliver a copy of new publications prior to distribution to the Ministry which registered the organization, (either the Ministry of Justice if the media organization is its own entity, or the Ministry of Culture if the publication is affiliated with another organization).

[14.](#) (SBU) COMMENT: NANSMIT represents Tajikistan's only true media watchdog organization, and even it toes a careful line in its regular electronic publications so as not to incur the authorities' wrath. Gearing up for next fall's presidential election, the government has all but suspended registration of new media organizations, unless they are state-sponsored, and keeps a keen eye on mass media reporting. While the MoS has yet to make an open or official investigation of NANSMIT, the rumors of MoS intimidation fit into the growing pattern of governmental interference in the media. END COMMENT.

ARMBRUSTER

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